

**The expostulations of Potowmac. As my interests were treated with great indifference in an august Assembly lately, by gentlemen, whose connexions I conceived to be under obligations to me; in duty to myself, I am let to make some observations ... Potowmac. Waters of Potowmac, Nov. 20, 1789 [George-Town**

The Expostulations of Potowmac.

AS my interests were treated with great indifference in an august Assembly, lately, by gentlemen, whose connexions I conceived to be under obligations to me; in duty to myself, I am led to make some observations, which may tend to set gentlemen right—as they seem to have acted on false principles, misled by some designing men. I conceived great hopes of Mr. A—s, from some speeches in the House, in the first part of the session. When virtues of an amiable and exalted nature accompany great talents, they do honor to the man, and are essentially serviceable to country.

It was commendable in Mr. A—s to endeavor to get acquainted with the different communications with the Western Country, and their distances: It was a misfortune that he fell into the hands of the wrong person: He, being a gentleman of candour, did not suspect the insidious designs of the informant, and was unluckily taken in. He believed he had his information from a person he might depend on. Had Mr. A—s extended his enquiry, he might have met with my exact portrait, from the place where I first appear on the surface of the earth, to where I am dissolved in the embraces of Chesapeake, in an actual survey made by order of the King, in a dispute between his Majesty and the late Lord Fairfax. Mr. A—s, from his information, was led to declare, that the tide-water on Potowmac was three hundred and four miles from Pittsburgh; now, by the communication lately opened, it is scarcely three hundred miles from Alexandria to Marietta, upwards of one hundred miles below Pittsburgh.

This informant leads Mr. A—s up Susquehannah to Juniatta, then up Juniatta, and AWAUGH far o'er the hills to Connomaugh. This communication is a discovery superior to any made by the late celebrated Capt. Cooke, in his last voyage. What resembles it most is De Fontes, river of the West, through which, and some Lakes contiguous, a Dutchman, fond of the marvellous, declared he arrived safe in the Atlantic.

Now, as Mr. A—s was misled by his insidious informant, and made a diffusive speech on the occasion, which served only to perplex the truth, and bring simple facts into doubt, with people who were strangers to the situation and circumstances of these waters, he, with his informant, whom I shall distinguish by the name of Connomaugh, may have used their endeavours to impress the Members from New-England with the same sentiments; and hence originated the measures so

obstinately pursued by the gentlemen of the juncto; because they thought they were in the right: But, on re-consideration, they will find themselves misled, and that they had greatly mistaken the interest of the States they had the honor to represent.—As this is the case, it is to be hoped that they will have candor enough to acknowledge it; so far from being derogatory, it will do them honor; it would be imitating one of the greatest Princes on earth, in the age he lived. Darius Histaspes was misled by his Prime Minister, Hamon, and was induced by his false and malignant representations to issue a Decree for the destruction of the Jews; but as soon as his Majesty was made sensible he was imposed upon, he had the magnanimity to acknowledge it in a proclamation, and revoked the Decree, as far as the laws of the empire would permit.

Mr. W—dfw—th declares, that being forced, and, as it were, dragged by the throat to take the seat of government into consideration, as it has been prematurely brought on, he wished it finished directly; if he did not vote at that instant, he would go into bargaining again:—That is to say, as it was prematurely brought on, let it be precipitately discussed! Such reasoning in a senator astonishes; it carries no conviction with it. Forced, dragged by the throat is harsh language. They speak a good smooth dialect in Connecticut; one of the most elegant addresses presented to the President of the United States, comes from that quarter. The gentleman declares that the people of New-England would think the Union at an end, was the seat of government fixed on Potowmac:—It disgusts me to hear the sacred Union mentioned with irreverence. Though that may be the sentiment of an individual, their representative, biassed perhaps by some money concerns in Philadelphia, the wise and considerate people of Connecticut have more understanding. What Mr. Wadsworth means by BARGAINING AGAIN, wants explanation, I hope it is not to be meant that he will bargain for his vote.

Mr. L—wr—e vindicates the eastern Members from any combination—It would give me pleasure to see him do it effectually: If he consults the interest of his constituents, he will vote for Potowmac, because the commercial and monied men of New-York will be deeply concerned in the funds, contracts, &c. The temporary seat of Congress will continue four or five years longer in New-York, if Potowmac is determined on for what is called the Permanent Seat. He thinks it improper to hold out terrors to the fancy: The proper way to convince is to address the understanding: this is certainly just, where understanding is to be found; but when what little there is, is wrapt up in an impenetrable cloud, and matters pre-judged, what is to be done? It is the duty of gentlemen to point out the dangers of adopting certain measures, and announce them to others who seem to be strangers to the consequence of adopting them.

I am as old as the Cumæan Sybille; and, though not disposed to prophecy at present, can tell from experience that flight incidents give rise to great events.

Mr. S—dg—k asserts that the wealth and population of the United States is to N.E. of Susquehannah: It is possible it may be so at present; but not so much as the gentleman gives out. In the exports from Boston, New-York and Philadelphia, it may be observed, that a great part of them are first imported by a circuitous trade; but the exports of the southern states are, in general, the natural produce of the soil, which is one mark of the wealth of nations. Gentlemen acquainted with the former state of Ormus, Alexandria in Egypt, Venice, and Antwerp, will find wealth and population fluctuate and change according to circumstances.—My sons are of opinion that the seat of Government on Potowmac, will contribute to their wealth and population; and, as they are the same people with those to the east of Susquehannah, the more populous and wealthy they are, the more they can contribute to the defence and support of Government. It is bad policy to throw any obstacle in the way to prevent their wealth and population.

Mr. S—dg—k is not for adopting the constitutional mode of computing our numbers, and warmly declares that the black cattle of New-England may, with equal propriety, be estimated as the black people of the United States. The gentleman may observe that the tax on black people helped the United States through the war; that it has contributed to the support of government since the peace; that their industry increases the wealth of the United States, as they increase our exports.—This being the case, neither Mr. S—dg—k nor the horned cattle of New-England, can justly deny that certain attention is to be paid to their numbers.

Mr. S—dg—k, reasoning on the hint taken from Montesquieu, is in favor of Potowmac, as it approaches the mountains, where there lives a set of men as warlike as ever inhabited the mountains of Biscay or Wales, whom all the pride and power of Rome could never totally subdue. An exploit performed lately by two boys of the name of Johnston, indicates enterprise, design, and intrepidity, scarcely to be paralleled in history. This is the country for soldiers. As to sailors, I boast of New-England-men; they are the true sons of the ocean; I glory in their enterprising genius, and rejoice in their success—I cherish a number of them in my bosom every winter; their temperance, and attention to business, give a good example to my sons. They open shop on board their vessel; dispose of their cargo (which, in general, consists of the natural produce and manufacture of New-England) for corn and other articles suitable to the West-Indies; carry them to the islands in the spring; barter them there for molasses, that favorite article, and necessary of life in New-England; and, for the most part, return under my wings in the winter.

In the spring, 1776, there were only thirty sea-vessels belonging to me and my brother James (River) and twenty-two of them were commanded by New-England-men. After so great attention given by me to New-England-men, how comes it to pass that they put a river in competition with me, that never cherished a New-England-man in her bosom? This naturally leads me to ask if any of the

Delegates from New-England were ever at sea, or concerned in trade? So great strangers do they appear to be to the real interest of their particular states. Do they know that several commercial gentlemen from New-England, are at the present time with me and the other rivers, soliciting contracts to supply the planters with brown linen, blankets and coarse woollens, and shoes for their families? If the seat of Government comes to Potowmac, they will have a great share of the money expended in the administration, and my waters will groan under the pressure of New-England manufactures, which they convey towards the Kentuckey and the territory of the Ohio. Although my sons are not in a habit of going to sea, they have equal merit. This was conspicuous at Eutaw, Ninety-Six, the Cowpens, King's Mountain, and Guilford! Hence it is plain, that, united, we become a great and mighty people by sea and land; respected by the nations of the earth, and formidable to our enemies.

Mr. S—dg—k asks if a majority was not to govern? My sons are firmly attached to the union; they will bear with patience and strict attention; the conduct of the Delegates from the other states, as far as men of honor and liberal principles can do, consistent with liberty: But they have sense to distinguish between a common majority and an artificial one; nor will they be long governed by a junctocracy.

The same gentleman demands with authority—Are we to be told, that a respectable state would not have joined the union, had they known the proceedings of this House this day? Are Mr. S—dg—k's organs of hearing so delicate, that they cannot bear being impressed with the truth? If the language displeases, remove the cause, and the effects will cease.—Let mutual attention and concessions take place, civilities will follow, and matters of government will go on smoothly and with ease.

As it is beyond all doubt, that my waters are, and will be the great thoroughfare to the country west of the mountains; the seat of government on my banks, or near them, will be an inducement to the inhabitants to come cheerfully under the same government, and to be subject to the same laws, and they will be the right arm of the United States: Whereas, were they a separate people, and become hostile, the states, east of the mountains would be exactly in the same situation to which the French were desirous to reduce them in the year 1753 and 4, when they took post at Læ Beuf, Venango, and Fort Du Quesne. The middle states could not live in peace and safety. The population of the eastern states would avail but little, and the monies now raised would not be sufficient to defend their extensive frontiers. These people and the middle states must be subject to the same government and laws.

If the seat of Government is on Potowmac, the monies expended in the administration will be more equally divided among the states, when every state may have its share there will be no cause of complaint nor murmurs. The merchants from Boston to Charleston will have an equal chance of

furnishing supplies. The monied men will have equal chance in dealing in the funds, and making contracts with government, when the exigencies of the states require it: On the other hand, if the seat of government is at Germantown, or near it, that respectable city, Philadelphia, is a vortex which will ingulph, absorb, and swallow all the monies expended in the administration; will engross the contracts and command the stocks. To throw great wealth into the hands of a few men, will be dangerous to the states. They, in a short time, will have as great influence in making acts of Congress, as the treasury of England has in making acts of Parliament. Another great consequence of fixing the seat of Government on Potowmac, will be an amazing increase of the trade of New-England; they will have an equal chance of furnishing supplies; they will have a great share of the monies expended in the administration; their monied men will have an equal chance in dealing in the stocks and making contracts, when the public exigencies require it: but above all, they will have ready cash for the manufactures and produce of New-England. In a few years, their imports into the rivers within the Capes of Virginia will amount, annually, to about six or eight hundred thousand dollars, which will be a great object, and next to their fishery, this will be a strong cement to the union: an intercourse so constant, and mutually interesting, between New-England, Virginia, and Maryland, will, in a manner, incorporate the states.

In order to remove some groundless prejudices which Mr. S—dg—k and others entertain against me, I beg leave to mention a few facts that are in controvertible.

VAN SWEARINGEN died lately, aged 107 years. He had lived seventy-one years on a plantation in Maryland, within two miles of my channel.

Colonel THOMAS CRESSOP died lately upon my bank, aged 109.

A certain DANIEL THOMPSON, born in a cave on the banks of the Delaware, before there was a house built in Philadelphia, died lately on Opeckon, within a few miles of my channel.

JOSEPH EDWARDS died lately, aged 102, who lived on Cape Capon time out of mind.

HUGH MILLAR is now living in my neighbourhood, aged 97.

DANIEL ROBERTS is now living with me, aged 92.

ROBERT BUCKLES is now living on my bank, aged 90.

PETER BURR nineteen children, eighteen of them on one plantation.

JOHN CONSTANCE, on Cape Capon, has twenty-six children.

BENJAMIN WARREN has sixteen children.

Greater instances of health, vigour, and longevity, are scarcely to be met with in America. Several people born in New-England have lived with me half a century; I cannot tell their age, but their heads are as white as the Province of Main in the middle of January. I have now finished part of my duty to myself and am a friend to mankind.

POTOWMAC.

Waters of Potowmac, Nov. 20, 1789.

---

190 #1 190/1 part 1 2-88-262.7

Expostulations of Potowmac, November 20, 1789

A vigorous defense of the proposal to locate the capital on the Potomac as opposed to the Susquehanna, and an attack on the New England members of Congress, who were advocating a more northerly location.